

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM77-5400-103
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

DAVIES BUILDING

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

725, 727 Kansas Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 2 Martha Keys

STATE

Kansas

CODE

20

COUNTY

Shawnee

CODE

177

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☒ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Harry Mahske

STREET & NUMBER

312 Anacapa Drive

CITY, TOWN

Camarillo

VICINITY OF

STATE

California 93010

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Shawnee County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1974

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kansas State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

___EXCELLENT
X___GOOD
___FAIR

___DETERIORATED
___RUINS
___UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

___UNALTERED
X___ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X___ORIGINAL SITE
___MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Davies Building is a three story, brick commercial building which faces east on Kansas avenue, the main shopping street in downtown Topeka. The building's design has been influenced by the High Victorian Italianate style.

The first story has been extensively remodeled and the original building surface has been covered with black ceramic tile on the south side and green marble on the north. The original stone piers to either side of the building and the columns which frame the centrally placed entrance to the upper stories still remain. The columns, one to either side of a single door, have been raised on rusticated plinths. The shafts of the columns have been smoothly finished and are crowned with a stylized Corinthian order. Resting on the abaci are large brackets with recessed panels carved with stylized acanthus leaves. A carved frieze connects the tops of the brackets. The brackets appear to support a two story oriel window which makes the already out of proportion columns seem even smaller. The entranceway, which was originally arched, has been covered over.

The upper two stories appear much as they did originally, though the facade was painted a light yellow in the 1960's, destroying the pleasing contrast between the brick and the limestone trim. The facade has been symmetrically arranged with a two story oriel window as the central bay. The facade has been enriched by several finely executed brick moldings and stone carvings which add an interesting texture by modulating light and shade on the face of the building. A limestone string-course separates the first and second stories. There are two double-hung windows with transoms separated between floors by two rectangular panels of bricks laid to resemble billet molding on the oriel. The area above the second story windows on the oriel has been decorated with two recessed panels.

To either side of the oriel on each story are three double-hung windows with transoms that have been separated with thin brick piers divided by a limestone block at the lower line of the transom. A limestone string course visually divides the second and third stories by running along the top of the windows. Above this stringcourse is another band of limestone molding which has been carved with vegetative motifs. The three windows to either side of the oriel align with those below. The brick piers separating the windows have been accented with limestone bases and blocks at a line established by the transoms. The window groupings are capped by a smooth band of limestone and have been completed by a segmental arch which is crowned by a carved stone molding and has dressed limestone impost blocks. Between the arch, which has been formed of brick and limestone voussoirs, is an area which has been divided into three parts by the continuation of the window piers and filled in with a billet molding formed by bricks. The entablature projects out slightly from the face of the building and is composed of a series of concave molded brick brackets which support the cornice. Above the cornice is a band of metal flashing.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1887 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Davies Building at 725, 727 Kansas avenue in Topeka was erected in 1887 for local investor B. M. Davies.

Davies, who had earlier engaged in the hardware and lumber business in Illinois, came to Topeka in 1877 and with his brother James purchased a Topeka lumber yard. The Davies Brothers Lumber Co. was for the next ten years one of the largest and most successful in the state. Benjamin Davies was also associated with a Topeka bank and was an active investor in real estate.

Topeka building permit number 5349 was issued May 17, 1887, for the Davies Building. The estimated cost of the structure was \$10,000 and the projected completion time was September, 1887. According to newspaper reports excavation for the building had begun in early May. By mid-July the frame had been raised, and the cut stone and red brick front was in place in August. By September 27, 1887, the building was completed and the tenants were open for business.

(The architect who designed the building has not yet been identified. A newspaper story one year later reported that architect T.H. Lescher was preparing plans for B. M. Davies for a building at 732 Kansas. Whether or not Davies retained the same architect isn't known, but the possibility exists that Lescher also designed the first building.)

A variety of tenants have occupied the building. From all indications there has always been at least one jewelry firm in the building. A current occupant, Wolfe's Jewelers, has been a prime tenant since 1898. In the late 1890's Dr. C. F. Menninger had his office there for several years and around the turn of the century architects J. C. Holland and Frank Squires were officed there. The Washburn College School of Law used the second floor from 1911 to 1913.

Davies retained ownership of the building until his death in 1913.

The Davies Building has continued to house businesses and offices. It is one of the last remaining commercial buildings which date from Topeka's boom period of the late 1880's. Although the building has been altered on the ground floor, it is still distinguished by the fine quality of its craftsmanship in the stone carving and brick moldings. The Davies Building is an important link with the past and adds variation to a generally nondescript commercial area.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

6.

Architectural Survey of Shawnee County
1974 County

Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Commission
Topeka Kansas

9.

Topeka Daily Capital, May 4, July 13, 24, August 16, 19, September 7, 1887;
September 30, 1888.

Topeka State Journal, September 27, October 5, 1887.

Washburn College Bulletin, v. 12, no. 1, (June, 1912), p. 93.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE

"B. M. Davies Dead," Topeka State Journal, October 13, 1913.

"B. M. Davies Is Dead," Topeka Daily Capital, October 12, 1913.

Blackmar, Frank W., editor, Kansas, A Cyclopedia of State History (Chicago, Standard Publishing Co., 1912), v. 3, part 2, p. 1469.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 268580 4325455
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Richard Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey
Cornelia Wyma, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER 120 West Tenth

CITY OR TOWN Topeka

DATE September 23, 1976

TELEPHONE 731-1111

STATE

Kansas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Nyle H. Miller

TITLE

Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

DATE November 19, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Topeka
Quadrangle



Davies Building
Topeka, Kansas

UTM Reference

15 268580 4325455

EST LAWRENCE INTERCHANGE 8 MI.
SAS CITY (JUNC. U.S. 69 & 169) 45 MI.